

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A9

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
23 September 1980

Muskie offers Iran respect, but no apologies

By Barry Schweid
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Calling for prompt release of the American hostages, Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie yesterday offered respect but no apology to Iran, saying that nation's security and Persian Gulf stability depend on a settlement.

"We are prepared to do our part in resolving fairly the issues between us," Muskie said in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly. He said Iran could end its isolation "from those nations that live in accordance with international law" and have world sanctions ended by freeing the 52 Americans it has held since last Nov. 4.

While promising not to intervene in Iranian affairs in the future, he did not recant past American support for the late pro-U.S. Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Muskie emphasized that the Carter administration recognizes the reality of the Iranian revolution that deposed Pahlavi.

"I urge the nation of Iran, its parliament and its people also to consider the human face of the hostage problem," Muskie said.

"These innocent people and their families have experienced acute suffering. I ask this community of nations to join us in urging that their ordeal be brought to a safe, honorable and prompt end."

Muskie called on the General Assembly to support the hostages' immediate release and to adopt effective measures to protect diplomats everywhere from terrorism. However, he made no specific proposal.

U.S. officials said they still considered the commission of inquiry that was appointed last February by U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim but was rebuffed in Tehran an effective diplomatic channel to Iranian authorities.

In Tehran, Hashemi Rafsanjani, speaker of the parliament, said the

legislative body would take up the issue of the hostages "only when (Iranian) demands are met by the United States." He made the comment as 38 legislators visited the occupied U.S. Embassy where at least some of the 52 hostages are being held.

At the same time, the Arab newsweekly Eight Days, which is published in London, said that Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has "finally agreed" that the hostages should be released within six weeks. An article in the weekly predicted that negotiations would be resumed early in October in what it termed "a frantic race to beat the November U.S. presidential election."

Muskie, in his speech, did not touch directly on Iran's widening border conflict with Iraq.

However, after a luncheon meeting with West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Muskie told reporters the conflict between Iraq and Iran could be the prelude to a wider war, with new perils for the American hostages.

"The degree of my concern has been pretty high right along. The extent to which the situation becomes less stable, obviously it becomes less predictable, and one's concern rises," he said.

Muskie said that with U.S. intelligence sources in Iran "not all they might be," it was difficult for the

Carter administration to assess developments in the border conflict.

Asked whether U.S. policy was one of neutrality, Muskie avoided a direct reply. He said what was important now was to find out as much as possible about the conflict.

The meeting with Genscher was the first in a series of consultations with allied governments about the Iran-Iraq fighting. They are expected to provide intelligence information unavailable to the United States since its break with Iran.

In the secretary of state's annual statement to the assembly, Muskie took a tough line toward the Soviet Union. He said the United Nations "must confront the continuing assault upon Afghanistan" and he denounced the intervention of Soviet-backed Vietnamese forces in Cambodia.

Muskie insisted on a total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and called for a political settlement there based on non-intervention, self-determination and non-alignment. There was no indication in the speech of a willingness to compromise with the Kremlin, which seeks to maintain its influence on the Kabul government.

Muskie also reiterated the United States' support for an international conference to deal with Cambodia's future. He said there has been some easing of starvation and disease, but "armed aggression continues."

Muskie offered the Soviet Union a renewed American commitment to arms control, easing of tensions around the world and to peace.

At the same time, he advised the 154-nation assembly, "let us keep in mind two basic purposes for which this body exists — to oppose armed aggression and to assuage its consequences."